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metroNEWS

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017

High 3°C/Low -2°C Spring!



Gavin Gariepy, 10, is the
founder of Rent a Brick.
SARAH HOYLES/FOR METRO

BIZ BUILT FROM THE LEGO UP

Edmonton entrepreneur hopes to hit it big with new rental company
metroNEWS

Twenty-storey towers get the green light

DEVELOPMENT

**Construction
near Whyte Ave
could start by
end of 2017**



**Jeremy
Simes**
Metro | Edmonton

Whyte Ave is about to get much
taller — and denser, too.

City council voted 10-2 (Coun.
Tony Caterina was absent) Mon-
day to green-light the construc-
tion of Southpark on Whyte, a
complex featuring two 20-storey
towers on 81 Avenue and two
four-storey buildings on Whyte
itself. But the decision didn't
make everyone happy.

Coun. Ben Henderson, who
represents the area and voted
against the proposal, suggested
council jumped the gun on the
decision. He said the develop-
ment violates the guidelines set

out in both the proposed Plan
Whyte and Winter City strategies
— at 50.5 metres, Southpark
is a smidgeon taller than the
50-metre height restriction and
still shadows Whyte Ave from
October to February.

"This stuff needs to be thought
out and I really worry we're be-
ing careless; it's a really import-
ant asset for the city," he said,
referring to the popular shop-
ping street. "This is not about
saying no, it's about recognizing
we have an important asset and
making sure we take care of it."

But the majority of councillors
felt the building will spruce up the
street — it'll include public park
space and allow street-front retail.

Mayor Don Iveson, who noted
the planning process was imper-
fect but supported the decision,
said Plan Whyte signals Edmon-
ton is changing. "We talk about
character and this (development)
will change that experience, but
so will it change having more resi-
dents and more business activity."

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trucks at Koch

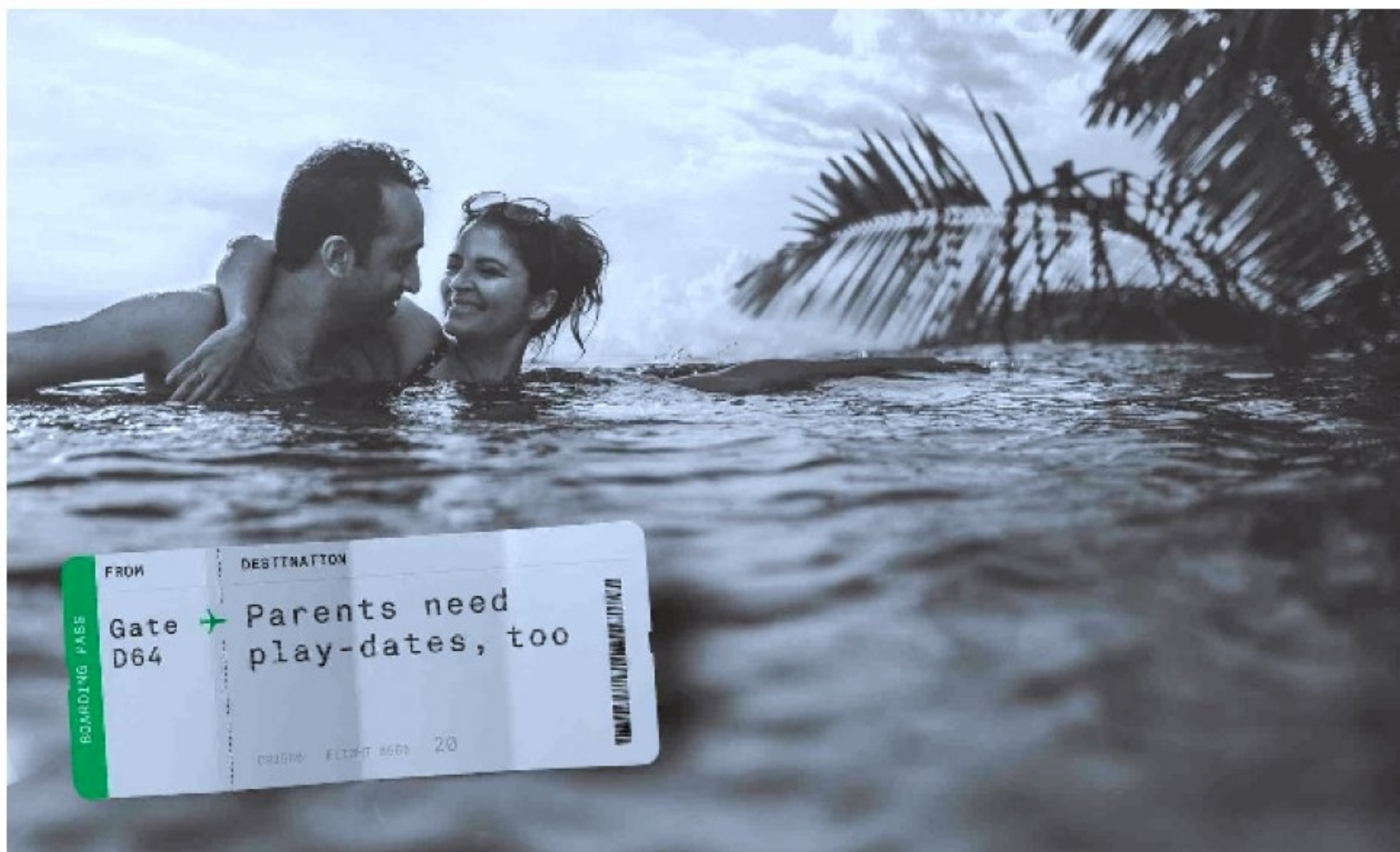


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Fast-tracking approvals

INFRASTRUCTURE

City hopes that speedy Metro Line wins over transit riders



Jeremy Simes
Metro | Edmonton

It's been exactly one month since the Metro Line started running full speed past her stop at MacEwan, which means Diana Tykha is now getting a little bit more sleep.

"I used to have to leave about an hour-and-a-half early," she said on the train Monday, as it zipped towards the core.

"It's nice to just have that extra 30 minutes to prepare for your day, so I'm happy."

Last month, the city finally gave the formerly slow-moving Metro Line the green light to run at full speed when travelling through intersections.

The long-plagued LRT line had been operating at speeds

below 50 km/h due to a broken signalling system, causing major headaches and requiring extensive software patches.

When Metro took a ride Monday, the train and signalling system appeared to be in order. Traffic wasn't backed up on Kingsway heavily, either.

But not everyone is pleased. Adam Millie, development director with the Alberta Avenue Community League, said he's still enduring traffic backlogs due to the signalling system.

"It's been stuck twice since it was going full speed," he said. "I just want them to fix it. It's exasperating."

Indeed, the city has more work to do before the Metro Line and Capital Line are integrated — Plan A — according to Guy Boston, manager of LRT delivery. He said the line has been performing well overall since going full speed last month.

"The vast majority, or 90 per cent of crossing times are fairly consistent," he said. "There is the odd time it could be another 30 seconds longer, which can feel like an eternity."



Diana Tykha says she can now leave a half an hour later thanks to the faster-moving Metro Line.

JEREMY SIMES / METRO EDMONTON

Still, train passengers seem to be happy. Passenger David Stevens said Monday he noticed his trip has been a bit faster. "It's noticeable, but nothing

major," he said.

Jessica Demeteric said she still avoids the Kingsway and 111 intersection when driving.

"If I have to wait for the train

when I'm driving, it's really not pleasant," she said. "Otherwise, I'm pretty happy that the trip on the train is a bit faster than what it used to be."

JOURNALISM

Metro a nominee for news award

Metro Calgary and Metro Edmonton have been named finalists in the National Newspaper Awards for coverage of the Fort McMurray wildfires.

The papers are nominated in the breaking news category for stories detailing the first 36 hours of evacuation efforts.

The coverage chronicled first-person accounts of some of the more than 88,000 fleeing the city, provided timely information to Albertans as the wildfires grew and delivered stories of courage and giving.

"The devastating effect of the Fort McMurray wildfires will not be forgotten by Alberta, or Canada," said Cathrin Bradbury, Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of Metro English Canada.

"We're tremendously proud of the work done by our Alberta reporting teams, with the support of their Toronto colleagues, to document the bravery and fear of those first crucial hours."

Winners of the National Newspaper Awards will be announced May 5 in Toronto.



We're tremendously proud of the work done by our Alberta reporting teams.

Cathrin Bradbury
Editor-in-Chief

TIMELINE of the Metro Line

April 2014: When line was to open. A faulty signal system pushed that back to June, then December, then February 2015, then, to the fall of 2015

September 2015: Metro Line opens, but isn't able to run at full speed.

November 2016: City officials still don't have an update on getting Metro Line running at full speed

January 2017: LRT digital signs are operational after being dark eight months

February 2017: City gets green light to run line at full speeds at intersections.

Still to come: Officials hope to have 'Plan A' complete sometime this year. Payments to Thales are expected after everything is fully functional.

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SCIENCE

Satellite ready for launch

A breadbox-sized piece of equipment scheduled to launch into space by the end of the month is on track to become the first satellite made entirely in Alberta.

A group of University of Alberta researchers and students have been hard at work on the satellite, dubbed Ex-Alt 1, since 2010. The satellite is designed to study weather in the ionosphere, which lies between 75 and 1,000 kilometres above the Earth's surface.

"We are the ones at the pinnacle of this research in terms of space in Alberta," said program manager Charles Nokes, a masters student in spaces physics.

Ex-Alt 1 is part of the larger Belgium QB50 Cube Satellite Mission, which will launch dozens of the small satellites into the ionosphere over the course of a year.

While the launch has been pushed back a few times — mostly recently on Monday, when NASA notified the team the satellite wouldn't be going this Friday, as planned — but Nokes isn't fazed.

The satellite, which has been ready and waiting at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida since August, is now slated to launch next week, Nokes said.

The satellite is also carrying a microchip with the name of the 600 or donors that helped get the project off the ground.

The group of students raised over \$150,000 through crowdfunding over the course of the project, Nokes said.

"It's kind of a romantic story, how we were able to crowdfund and build this all in Alberta."

'It's reinforcing some very outdated gender roles'

EDUCATION

Women's studies course north of city under fire



Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

A junior high north of Edmonton is taking heat online for a new women's studies course that preaches empowerment, but teaches girls about face shape, polite conversation and applying makeup.

The class launched Feb. 1 at Eleanor Hall School in Clyde, and is open to students in grades 6 to 9. There are 25 girls signed up for the option as part of the school's Career and Technology Foundations program, according to officials from Pembina Hills Public Schools.

But criticism online has been swift, after a school board newsletter dated March 15 described what students would be learning.

"Girls self-image and self-esteem takes a battering in a world where they are bombarded with distorted images of what it means to be female," the newsletter reads.

Activities outlined include analyzing face and body shape "to determine which hairstyle is most flattering."



Cristina Stasia is a gender studies professor at the University of Alberta. ALEX BOYD/METRO

Students will also complete "an online shopping activity to identify their own personal style," and "plan recipes, table settings, dinner music and review dinner party etiquette and polite conversation."

Cristina Stasia, a gender studies professor at the University of Alberta, called the focus on appearance "extremely problematic."

"It's reinforcing some very outdated gender roles. There

is a need for gender studies in schools, but the way we do that is by teaching critical media literacy," she said.

"You don't focus on what their bodies look like, but what their minds can do."

Still, Stasia applauds the school for starting a women's studies class.

"I believe the intentions behind this course are good," she said. "Trying to provide a space where girls can discuss issues

that disproportionately impact girls, that's important."

David Garbutt, acting superintendent for Pembina Hills, said it's possible parts of the class "missed the mark."

"On the face of it, I can understand why people would be concerned, but that's not the purpose or intent of this option."

He said, based on his conversation with the teachers involved, that the course would

also include more media criticism and discussion of gender stereotypes.

"We want them to be critical thinkers, we want them to analyze what's in the media," he said.

"I want to ensure people that we're not going out of our way to pigeonhole our kids."

Garbutt said he's currently accepting feedback, and is open to making changes to the course in future.

RICK MERCER REPORT

#rickmercerreport

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Kid builds Lego-for-rent business

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Fans can pick from six sets of building blocks

Sarah Hoyles
For Metro | Edmonton

A local 10-year-old is building a business out of Lego.

Gavin Gariepy is renting out his collection of the toy building blocks as part of a new venture called Rent a Brick.

"Big Lego sets can be very expensive," said Gariepy. "Not everyone can afford the biggest sets, so I thought people should get to try the amazing ones like these."

Currently, Lego enthusiasts can pick from six available sets, including the 2,144-piece Star Wars-themed Assault on Hoth Set — which includes the Wampa that captures Luke Skywalker, according to the Rent a Brick website.

Gariepy takes rental bookings via text or through his website. Rentals start at \$15

and last for seven days, which Gariepy figures provides "more than enough time to build and play with it. Then give it back."

He got the idea of a Lego rental company last year, but needed capital. So he applied for a \$500 grant from a local bank.

Russ Morrow, CEO of River City Credit Union, said his financial institution gives 10 grants to youth aged eight to 13 every year as part of a program for young entrepreneurs.

"It helps kids have an entrepreneurial experience," he said.

Gariepy got his start-up cash in June 2016, and spent it on building and maintaining a website at rentabrick.ca, as well as printing up business cards. He officially launched his company in January.

Since then, Gariepy has had a handful of renters, mostly kids, but some adults, he said.

Gariepy is planning to reinvest his profits to purchase more Lego sets and expand his inventory. But he's not the only entrepreneur in the family. His sister Geneva also received seed money last summer to start her made-to-order cupcake business, Mini Cupcake Heaven.



I thought people should get to try the amazing ones like these.
Gavin Gariepy

Gavin Gariepy, 10, has started a new business called Rent A Brick, where he rents out expensive Lego sets. SARAH HOYLES/FOR METRO

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Federal finance minister Bill Morneau chose a pair of shoes from Edmonton-based shoemaker Poppy Barley to table the budget in the House of Commons. TWITTER

Local shoes go national

DESIGN
Morneau laces up startup's snappy Oxfords

Pushpa Balgobin
For Metro | Edmonton

A week and a half ago, the phone in Poppy Barley's Whyte Avenue office rang with an unexpected order.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau has selected the Edmonton-based custom shoe designers to provide the traditional new footwear for the tabling of the federal budget on Wednesday.

"It is really an honour for us. As a startup company and a female-design company, we were incredibly thrilled that the minister was interested in purchasing one of our designs," Caroline Gault, Poppy Barley's director of content, told Metro.

She said the company's website and social-media pages exploded after Morneau tweeted about his new black \$250 Ed-

monton Oxfords.

"It was incredible to be sought out by the minister, and through no solicitation of our own," Gault said.

The 4.5-year-old company was founded by Edmonton sisters Kendall and Justine Barber in 2012 and sells hundreds of pairs of shoes across the U.S. and Canada each month.

Gault said the company, which was recently nominated in the emerging designers category at the Canadian Arts and Fashion Awards, only got into making men's shoes in 2015.

"It's a good thing we started," she said.

Following the tradition of wearing a new pair of shoes to table the budget, Morneau modelled his kicks for students at Nelson Mandela Public School in Toronto.

Morneau shared photos of the reveal on Twitter on Monday, saying:

"I think my new shoes are a hit," adding he's looking forward to wearing shoes "designed by two inspirational Canadian women" on Wednesday.

PINCHER CREEK

Boy endures significant injuries in snowmobile crash

A 14-year-old boy has been injured in a snowmobile crash in southwestern Alberta.

Mounties say it happened Monday just before noon in the area of Lost Creek near the Crowsnest Pass. Pincher Creek RCMP, fire services and

Kananaskis search-and-rescue teams, as well as Alberta conservation officers, all went to the remote area to get the boy out.

STARS air ambulance flew the boy to Pincher Creek Health Centre for treatment. Police say the boy has significant but non-life-threatening injuries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDUCATION

48-hour Anti-Racism films set for screening

Edmontonians are invited to see the results of the 48-hour Anti-Racism film challenge Tuesday evening.

Over two days, amateur and professional filmmakers were challenged to make a film related to racial discrimination.

Now viewers can enjoy the fruits of their labour at the Princess Theatre.

The 2017 Anti-Racism festival was organized by the Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation, which partnered with the Edmonton Digital Arts College and the Centre for Race and Culture to mount the event. METRO

DETAILS

The screening is on at Princess Theatre tonight. Free tickets are available via eventbrite. METRO

WINDFALL

Albertan wins \$1M

A Calgary man said he was "shocked" when he discovered he'd won \$1,000,000 through Lotto 6/49.

Charles Stevenson won the million-dollar prize on the only Guaranteed Prize Draw on Feb. 18.

"It's overwhelming," he said. "I checked the ticket twice, in two different stores, to make sure I was seeing things right. I was just vibrating for hours."

Stevenson plans on using his winnings to enjoy some fun in

the sun with a trip to Mexico this month.

"We already planned to go to Mexico, but now I think we'll make it a bigger trip and get our kids to come along, too," he said.

Long term, Stevenson said he hopes the money will allow him to take a slightly earlier retirement than initially planned.

The ticket was purchased at the Ridge Mart located at 1920 - 62 Avenue SE Calgary. METRO

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Don't worry about the debt

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ECONOMY

Ceci defends budget from critics at credit rating agencies

Alberta's provincial debt is growing but remains "manageable," despite criticism from credit-rating agencies following last week's budget, Finance Minister Joe Ceci says.

Agencies including Moody's Investor Service and DBRS Ltd. say they are reviewing the province's ratings, which are used to determine its cost of borrowing money, because of its growing debt levels.

In a speech to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on Monday morning, Ceci says he expects Alberta revenues will grow with its economy over time to reduce the deficits.

"I certainly understand, appreciate the credit-rating concerns people have, but I think if we keep care of the fundamentals in this province, which is continuing to move forward, continue to have good governance, continue to be

an attractor with low taxes and promote this province to others, we'll take care of those other things," he said. "What we'll see going forward is an expansion of the economy."

Chamber president Adam Legge said the budget was based more on hope than realism and said the government must work to shrink the gap between revenue and spending.

The province expects a \$10.3-billion deficit for the coming fiscal year, which starts April 1, and forecasts that its debt will rise to \$71.1 billion by 2020.

"Alberta's rapidly rising debt burden, protracted deficits and above-inflation expense growth continue to put significant pressure on its rating," stated Adam Hardi, Moody's assistant vice-president, in a news release on Friday.

"The province's plan to issue an additional \$38 billion in debt over the next three years to finance its operating deficits and capital plans will contribute to a rising debt burden that may approach 150 per cent of revenues by 2019-20 (on a Moody's adjusted basis)." THE CANADIAN PRESS



Finance Minister Joe Ceci expects Alberta revenues will grow with its economy over time to reduce the deficits. KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Following last week's cut to the Alberta Media Fund, some experts in the province's film and TV sector are hoping to overhaul the industry's funding model.

"We're working diligently with the provincial government to ensure we identify the needs of the industry," said Luke Azevedo, film and TV commissioner at Calgary Economic Development.

He believes implementing a system to incentivize all parts of the film sector and increasing the grant caps on larger ventures would convince those lucrative projects to come to the province.

In last week's budget, the NDP reduced the Alberta Media Fund from \$36.9 million to \$34 million.

Barry Thorson, executive director of the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers, said these funds make investors more likely to jump aboard a project.

"It's how people make their livings," said Thorson. "It's not a 'nice to have'; it's an absolute."

WITH FILES FROM BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

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Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson World Mosaic Campaign. CONTRIBUTED

Mayors take fight to racism

POLITICS

World Mosaic Project grabbing global attention



Pushpa Balgobin
For Metro | Edmonton

An Edmonton-based anti-racism campaign has started to gain traction around the world.

"We shouldn't be living in fear or hatred of people in our everyday lives, in our classrooms," founder Jeremiah Ellis says of his inspiration for the World Mosaic Project, which is now getting messages of support from across the globe.

Ellis initially founded the pro-



Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi. CONTRIBUTED

ject to fight hate at the University of Alberta. It's an online campaign that urges supporters to post photos of themselves online with the hashtag #worldmosaic to showcase global diversity.

Ellis and his friends started the project after they saw how normalized Islamophobia and xenophobia were becoming.

"My friend and I had a discussion about how diversity is so much a part of being a Canadian, all of us are like an individual mosaic tile," Ellis said of the campaign, first started in 2015.

Then, the influx of Syrian refugees into Canada and President Trump's Muslim Ban made discussions around diversity more urgent, he said.

The Project has since started to take off — politicians across the country have posted messages, including both Mayor Don Iveson and Federal Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi have posted messages of support, Ellis said.

But it was support from another place that really made Ellis proud.

"We had a group of students in China take photos showing the logo and messages. They didn't speak English, but it was young people connected to ending Islamophobia and Xenophobia," Ellis said.

"This was an opportunity to take a stand and speak out about hate."

CONSTRUCTION

Roads close for Rogers Place fan replacement

It's official — roads near Rogers Place will be temporarily closed so crews can replace nine of the arena's roof fans.

The city said Monday the closures will begin Tuesday and will last until March 25.

The closures are a result of nine fans breaking in early March.

Among other problems, a piece from the housing of one of the fans broke off, slid down the roof and landed

in an adjacent unoccupied construction site.

Here are the times and days the roads are closed:

March 21, 2017: 105 Avenue between 102 Street & 103 Street starting at 10 a.m.

March 22, 2017: 105 Avenue between 102 Street & 103 Street (Expected to reopen by late afternoon).

March 23, 2017: 104 Street just north of 104 Avenue. 104 Street is anticipated to reopen to local traffic at 6 p.m. Parking on the west side of the median remains closed until 6 p.m. on March 24, 2017.

March 24 to 25, 2017: 104 Avenue between 104 Street and 103 Street. Complete road closure between the hours of 6:00 p.m. (March

+ CLOSURES

The city indicated on Monday that the closures will begin on Tuesday and will last until March 25.

The repairs are needed to fix broken arena fans

24) to 6:00 a.m. (March 25). METRO



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Leaders take merger baby steps

POLITICS

Jean says he's walking into Kenney talks with open mind

The leader of Alberta's Opposition Wildrose party was trying to keep expectations low for his first meeting with Jason Kenney following the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership race.

Brian Jean said he wanted to congratulate Kenney on his election as leader and start drawing a road map on how the two parties could merge.

"I'm not going to get into the details of how this merger will work," he said Monday. "I'm walking into this meeting with an open mind and I'm hoping that we'll have a good constructive meeting."

But Jean stressed again that any new conservative party would have to be created under a Wildrose legal framework and with the approval of Wildrose members. He also said he's committed to becoming Alberta's next premier.



Jason Kenney celebrates his leadership win at the Alberta PC Party leadership convention in Calgary on March 18. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"If I receive that privilege, I'm sure it will be behind a consolidated conservative movement going forward."

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley congratulated Kenney on his victory but didn't waste any time criticizing his plan to repeal the bulk of the NDP's legislative agenda. She said that would mean "putting big

money back into politics, raising school fees, recrowding our school classrooms and reversing the approval on (the) Kinder Morgan" pipeline.

"I would suggest pretty quickly he'll have to come clean on what his actual plans are," she said.

"I look forward to having our mainstream ideas contrasted

with the rather more extreme ideas that we hear from folks on the other side of the aisle."

Also on Monday, a group of five lawyers released a legal review that suggests there is no reason why the Progressive Conservative and Wildrose parties cannot legally join to form a new political entity before the next provincial election.

The lawyers have been working on the issue since last fall and include supporters from both parties. It was not commissioned by either political party.

"We have concluded that a merger can be done," said spokesman Andy Crooks.

pressing opinions.

"The Elections Alberta office was starting to issue press releases. Now, we weren't asked to answer these questions, but neither were they. We're simply volunteer lawyers. They on the other hand are regulators with serious powers," he said.



I look forward to having our mainstream ideas contrasted with the rather more extreme ideas that we hear from folks on the other side of the aisle.

Premier Rachel Notley

"Moreover, it is our opinion, that it can be done without the consent of the chief electoral officer of Elections Alberta."

Alberta election rules forbid two parties from merging and dictates that they fold up and surrender their assets.

But the lawyers suggested both parties could register as corporations and merge as corporate entities. That would also allow the transfer of assets between the two parties.

Crooks said Elections Alberta should have waited until it received a proposal before ex-

"I take some umbrage at regulators announcing dispositions of questions before they're asked."

The team of lawyers was recruited by former Wildrose Party president Dave Yager, who was told by some donors and party members to "go figure it out."

"The issue is not what, but how," he said.

"Everyone's been talking about what to do since the last election and some really smart people said these parties have got to merge." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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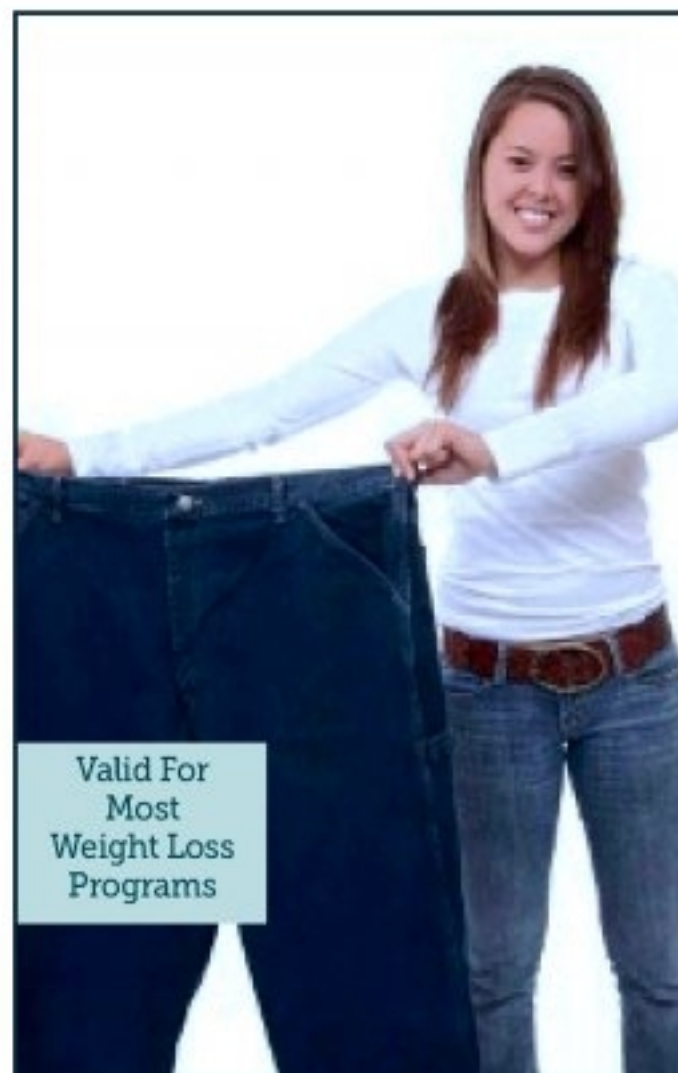
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Details ahead on new social services program

BUDGET

Infrastructure bank could bring in billions of dollars in funds

A new infrastructure bank could free up billions in new money for social services Canadians regularly use, internal government documents say — provided the experimental new institution meets its lofty financing goals.

The presentation, prepared for the economic growth council that's advising Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet, shows transit and water projects going through the bank could mean more federal dollars for social infrastructure like child care, recreational facilities and seniors' centres.

Funding for social infrastructure projects, which tend to be less attractive to private investors, could increase by one-third if the bank meets its target of leveraging \$4 in private investment for every \$1 from the fed-



Much of the political intrigue ahead of Finance Minister Bill Morneau's second federal budget Wednesday has been removed. THE CANADIAN PRESS

eral government, the documents indicate.

Those documents, obtained under the Access to Information Act, demonstrate the Liberal government's thinking on how money from its long-term

infrastructure program could help them meet their economic and political goals.

The program's three streams — social, transit and so-called "green" infrastructure — are worth almost \$69.1 billion in

new funding over the next 10 years.

Wednesday's budget will unveil more details of how the money will flow and where the funding for the bank will come from, say sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Concerns have persisted that the funding would be diverted away from money earmarked to cities and provinces.

The government has argued the promised infrastructure money remains available even if it is delivered through the bank, which cities and provinces will have the option of using.

More details about the bank itself will come in the weeks and months to follow once cabinet has approved tabling the legislation that will create the institution, the sources said.

The Liberals plan to finance the bank with \$35 billion — \$15 billion of it in cash — to backstop projects and attract private investment for those that can generate revenue through transit fares, water rates or road tolls.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cut it out: Cardboard Trudeaus get banned

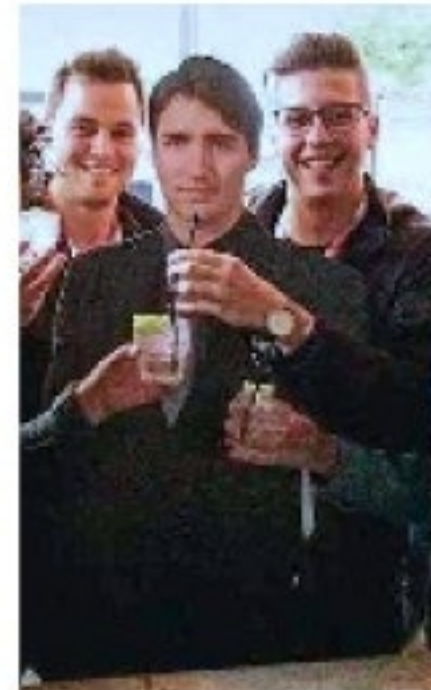
Justin Trudeau may still be a big draw on the international circuit, but his cardboard stand-ins have fallen flat.

Global Affairs has instructed diplomatic missions in the U.S. to stop using life-size cardboard cut-outs of the prime minister to promote Canada. The order follows the revelation last week that prime ministerial replicas turned up at an event last June organized by the Canadian consulate in Atlanta and earlier this month at a Canadian music festival in Austin, Tex.

The Canadian embassy in Washington also rush-ordered a cut-out of its own for use at Canada Day celebrations last year, at a cost of \$147.79, including \$72.80 for next-day delivery.

The embassy has not explained whether the cardboard Trudeau was ever actually used. Regardless, it will now have to go into storage.

"We are aware of instances where our missions in the United States had decided to purchase and use these cut-outs," Global Affairs spokeswoman Natasha Nystrom said in an email. It's not clear if the missions ever had depart-



Trudeau replicas turned up at an events in Atlanta and Austin. TWITTER.COM

mental permission to use the cardboard cut-outs.

According to emails obtained by the Conservatives through the Access to Information Act, the Washington embassy's interest in using a cardboard likeness was sparked by word that the Atlanta consulate had put one on display at a pre-Canada Day event last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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FBI probes Trump ties to the Russians

INVESTIGATION

White House moves to cut links to past associates

It's now been revealed that the FBI had two political bombshells ready to drop during the last U.S. election. One, it unloaded on Democrats two weeks before election day. The other it held onto — until two months into Donald Trump's presidency.

It dropped Monday.

In an announcement that could forever affect history's account of the 2016 election, the FBI announced that it has been investigating possible criminal collusion between the Russian government and associates of the Trump campaign since July.

FBI director James Comey revealed it while testifying to Congress. He's the same FBI director who during the campaign commented publicly about an investigation into Hillary Clin-

ton's emails. The news came in a five-hour hearing that concluded with the Republican committee chair stating the politically obvious: this shadow will linger for a while, creeping over the Trump White House.

"There's a big, grey cloud that you have now put over people who have very important work to do to lead this country."



There's a big, grey cloud that you have now put over people who have very important work to do to lead this country. James Comey

Comey replied: "I understand."

His revelation fanned a low-level fire crackling for months in the U.S. capital over why the Putin government intervened in the U.S. election; what its motives might have been; and whether the Trump team knew about it.

Late last July, Comey said, the agency began investigating contacts between Trump associates and the Russian gov-

ernment — which is believed to have stolen emails from the Democratic party and leaked them through intermediaries Wikileaks and Guccifer.

The investigation will include whether crimes were committed. It's unclear how long the probe will take. And law-enforcement officials wouldn't say a word about which Trump associates were

targeted. Comey declined to say whether his agency had questioned Michael Flynn, Trump's just-fired national-security adviser; Paul Manafort, his fired campaign manager; or Roger Stone.

The White House moved to cut ties to all of them.

Trump spokesman Sean Spicer played down the importance of Flynn, calling him "a volunteer of the campaign."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



AFRICA 27 MILLION LACK ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER A girl washes her legs at a water point four kilometres from her home in Aweil, South Sudan. As World Water Day approaches on March 22, nearly 27 million people do not have access to clean water in Somalia, South Sudan, northeastern Nigeria and Yemen, compounding the problems of famine and civil war, according to UNICEF. Even those who can find water spend much of their day hiking, fetching and carrying the containers it. MACKENZIE KNOWLES-COURSIN/UNICEF VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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ADVOCACY

Human rights commission calls for a hearing to address president's policies

A pan-American commission will hold an emergency hearing in Washington to investigate the impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's executive orders on human rights in the country.

Tuesday's hearing by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was prompted by the requests from advocates in Canada and the U.S. to review what they called "deteriorating" conditions faced by asylum seekers and other migrants under the

Trump administration.

These groups have asked the commission to make findings that Trump's travel ban against six Muslim-majority countries, which has been temporarily blocked by judges, and his expansion of detention and deportation against migrants violate U.S. human rights obligations. Some of the groups hope the human rights body will rule the U.S. is not safe for refugees and recommend the suspension of

the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement.

"The expedited removals and expansion of detention under the orders are going to have profound implications on the U.S. asylum system," said Efrat Arbel, a University of British Columbia law professor who co-authored, with the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program, a recent review of Trump's executive orders.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IRAQ

Dozens killed, wounded in Baghdad suicide attack

A suicide car bombing in Baghdad killed at least 23 people on Monday and wounded 45 others, according to Iraqi officials.

The attack targeted a commercial area in the Amil neighbourhood, officials said. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but Daesh has been behind previous Baghdad bombings. Iraqi forces have been battling the extremists in Mosul, the country's second largest city, since October.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BREXIT

The countdown begins

Britain will begin divorce proceedings from the European Union on March 29, starting the clock on two years of intense political and economic negotiations that will fundamentally change both the nation and its European neighbours.

Britain's ambassador to the EU, Tim Barrow, informed European Council President Donald Tusk of the exact start date on Monday morning.

"We are on the threshold of the most important negotiation for this country for a generation," Brexit Secretary David Davis said. "The gov-

ernment is clear in its aims: a deal that works for every nation and region of the U.K. and indeed for all of Europe — a new, positive partnership between the U.K. and our friends and allies in the European Union."

The trigger for all this tumult is the innocuous-sounding Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, a never-before-used mechanism for withdrawing from the bloc. British Prime Minister Theresa May, under the Article, will notify Tusk of her nation's intentions to leave the 28-nation bloc. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Laptops, iPads banned from some U.S. flights

SECURITY CRACKDOWN

Eight countries face restrictions on what they're allowed to bring

The U.S. government is temporarily barring passengers on certain flights originating in eight other countries from bringing laptops, iPads, cameras and most other electronics in carry-on luggage starting Tuesday.

The reason for the ban was not immediately clear. U.S. security officials would not comment. The ban was revealed Monday in statements from Royal Jordanian Airlines and the official news agency of Saudi Arabia.

A U.S. official said the ban will apply to nonstop flights to the U.S. from 10 international airports serving the cities of Cairo in Egypt; Amman in Jordan; Kuwait City in Kuwait; Casablanca in Morocco; Doha in Qatar; Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia; Istanbul



A U.S. official said the ban will apply to nonstop flights to the U.S. from 10 international airports. CONTRIBUTED

in Turkey; and Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The ban was indefinite, said the official.

A second U.S. official said the ban will affect nine airlines in total, and the Transportation Security Administration will inform the affected airlines at 3

a.m. Eastern time Tuesday.

The officials were not authorized to disclose the details of the ban ahead of a public announcement and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Royal Jordanian said cellphones and medical devices were excluded from the ban. Every-

thing else, the airline said, would need to be packed in checked luggage. Royal Jordanian said the electronics ban affects its flights to New York, Chicago, Detroit and Montreal.

David Lapan, a spokesman for Homeland Security Department, declined to comment. The Transportation Security Administration, part of Homeland Security, also declined to comment.

A U.S. government official said such a ban has been considered for several weeks. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose the internal security discussions by the federal government.

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly phoned lawmakers over the weekend to brief them on aviation security issues that have prompted the impending electronics ban, according a congressional aide briefed on the discussion. The aide was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY FIRE

'It's a bit of a war zone down there'

A huge fire at an apartment building under construction in suburban Kansas City has sparked fires at several homes blocks away.

The eight-alarm fire broke out about 3:30 p.m. Monday at the multimillion-dollar City-Place development in Overland Park, Kansas, sending plumes of smoke and embers toward homes in the suburban neighbourhood nearby, local papers reported.

Once one roof caught fire, embers jumped from roof to roof, spreading the blaze, said Overland Park Fire Department spokesman Jason Rhodes.

"It's a bit of a war zone down there frankly," Rhodes said. No serious injuries were reported, although one firefighter suffered a minor injury, he said.

Some residents have been evacuated as a precaution.

Neighbourhood residents described hearing an explosion before debris fell on houses.

"It sounded like a bomb," said Juan Roque.

Rhodes said it was largest fire he had seen in his 10-year career with the fire department.

"Nothing of this magnitude," he said. "This is big."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OKLAHOMA

Senator resigns over child prostitution charges

A Republican state senator facing felony child prostitution charges after police say he solicited sex from a 17-year-old boy plans to resign from his seat, his attorney said late Monday.

Attorney Ed Blau said he'd recently been retained

by Sen. Ralph Shortey and that it was premature to comment on charges until he had more time to discuss the case with his client.

"Other than the probable cause affidavit that was released publicly, I haven't seen a single police report or talked to a single witness," Blau said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The act of chewing gum made shoppers more alert, which made them more likely to absorb promotional information in the store, according to new research... TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gum new lure to draw in shoppers

RETAIL

Chewing made customers more alert, research found

Retailers hoping to engage shoppers may want to try handing out bubble gum at the door, according to new research.

In a series of five studies, researchers from Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management in Toronto found that handing out gum to shoppers encouraged them to shop for more items and with a higher level of engagement.

The act of chewing made the shoppers more alert.

"If you're more alert, you're more likely to absorb the information that is in the store — the promotional and even the nutritional labels — and

have the cognitive function to absorb that information," said Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, associate professor, retail management, at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management.

Although one of the five studies found that people chewing gum as they shopped for groceries were more likely to buy more items, none of the studies made a strong connection between chewing gum and money spent.

"I can't say from my research that it has led to buying more products or more expensive



I can't say from my research that it has led to buying more products.

Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee

products, but one can sort of deduce that if people are browsing more and spending more time shopping, it could result in higher sales," said Lee.

The studies were conducted in Denver and Toronto, and included testing in a lab where volunteers were asked to imagine they were shopping online, a study that involved volunteers being asked to shop at Amazon.com, and a field study involving 56 grocery store shoppers at an unnamed retailer in Toronto.

The act of chewing was important — shoppers did not respond the same when given candies that can't be chewed.

The study determined that two pieces of gum is the optimal number of pieces to hand out to shoppers. Giving them too many pieces of gum causes them to focus on the gum, not shopping.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RESEARCH

Disaster-planning tool aims to work like a video game

A pair of researchers in Halifax are working on an elaborate, computerized disaster-planning simulator that will one day function like a multi-player video game — the first version of which has already plotted what could happen if the port city is inundated by a catastrophic flood.

Professor Ahsan Habib at Dalhousie University says a test of an early model has suggested it would take 15 hours to evacuate the densely popu-

lated Halifax peninsula if the ocean suddenly rose between 3.9 and 7.9 metres.

"We have only five exit points ... (making) our transportation network very vulnerable in a mass evacuation," Habib said in an interview Monday from the Dalhousie Transportation Collaboratory, a lab that brings together civil engineers and urban planners.

Habib says the peninsula's narrow roads and lack of highways would make an evacua-

tion particularly difficult.

"The ultimate goal is come up with some sort of a game at the end, making it much more user friendly so that emergency managers can get training and learn lessons," Habib says.

Dalhousie professor Kevin Quigley says the final version of the program will operate much like a so-called massive multiplayer online role-playing game — but that will take another two years to develop.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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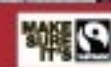
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BLUEPRINT by David Hains

KEEPING TRANSIT ON TRACK

Transit ridership declined across North America in 2016, causing a revenue shortage in dozens of cities. It's tempting for some agencies to consider cutting service or increasing fares to make up the difference. But those moves can cause further declines in ridership, creating a vicious cycle.

Instead, Metro looks at how cities can get on a more virtuous cycle.

Primary Concerns

With 600 routes, bus riders in Seoul, South Korea, were often confused. Buses didn't run on time. And by 2004, 60 per cent of riders were complaining. The agency **colour-coded its buses** so riders could identify where they were headed, and routes were simplified. **Outcome:** Complaints went down to 15 per cent and ridership increased by 30 to 40 per cent.

Focus

Houston **cut back service on low-frequency bus routes** in favour of ensuring regular runs on the most well-used routes. That way, people can turn up to the bus stop without worrying about the schedule. **Outcome:** Bus ridership increased by 4 per cent without budget increases. It was one of two cities to see an increase of more than 1 per cent in 2016.

Fare Price

Facing high fares, L.A. **dedicated a half-cent sales tax** in 1980 to transit. Some money went to improving service, while another chunk went to lowering fares. **Outcome:** In 1985, L.A. had its best year for transit ridership. Fares skyrocketed afterwards, and L.A. never again reached the same ridership levels.

Wider Web

One way to make transit more attractive is to focus on the customer experience. That can mean **better bus shelters, clean stations**, or something as simple as **free Wi-Fi**. **Outcome:** In California, Amtrak achieved a 2.7 per cent increase in ridership after it introduced free Wi-Fi.

Culture Shock

To cut down on people driving to work alone in mostly-empty cars, Seattle introduced a **law** more than 20 years ago **forcing big companies to encourage alternatives** like transit or carpooling. Companies offered transit passes or cash incentives to quit driving. **Outcome:** Solo drivers declined by 4.6 per cent.

PUBLIC WORKS

The week in urbanism



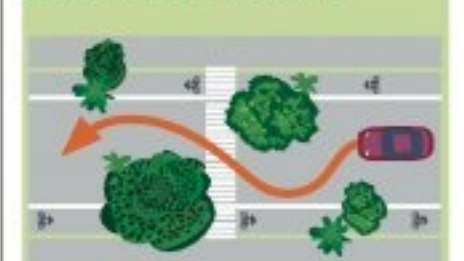
Sweden gets all the cool things

A Stockholm architecture firm has proposed a giant, glass egg-shaped indoor park. The idea is to give Stockholmers a green refuge during the long, cold winter months. The warm air for the greenhouse-like facility would come from a nearby underground parking lot.

Walk this way

Dubai has introduced a "smart" pedestrian traffic signal. Using sensors and cameras, it automatically detects the needs of pedestrians (walk time, number of pedestrians) on the sidewalk and in the crosswalk, and adjusts traffic signals accordingly.

URBAN DICTIONARY



DEFINITION

Woonerf is a Dutch word for streets that give equal priority to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians by placing them all on the same level and reducing driving speeds to walking pace. Also referred to as "home zones."

USE IT IN A SENTENCE

Emma felt safe walking down the neighbourhood **woonerf**, which put her at eye level with motorists.

CITY CHAMP

Hazel Borys is the managing director of PlaceMakers, a planning and consultation firm. Based in Winnipeg, Borys used to love sprawl, but now tweets about zoning, pedestrian issues, and art.

@hborys



WORD ON THE STREET by Sarah-Joyce Battersby

Popping ballooning budgets on mega infrastructure jobs



Matti Siemiatycki CONTRIBUTED

The federal government is expected to flesh out a plan Wednesday to invest almost \$190 billion in infrastructure over the next 12 years.

But will it be enough?

Whether it's Boston's Big Dig, Europe's Chunnel or (insert your local project here), mega projects are rarely on-budget. In fact, they chronically rack up extra costs.

Metro asked Matti Siemiatycki, a planning professor at the University of Toronto, why it happens, and how to fix it.

While mega projects are complex, consistent overruns suggest it's not random, he said. If it was, planners would

guess under budget sometimes, which rarely happens.

Instead, one theory goes that someone is lying, either to themselves or to others.

Lying to oneself is called optimism bias. It means we imagine best-case scenarios and hope issues can be controlled even as things go off the rails.

Lying to others is what leading scholar Bent Flyvbjerg calls strategic misrepresentation. Large projects sometimes incentivize fudging both the costs and the benefits, like giving overly sunny ridership projections for a transit project, in order to win public and political support.

But Siemiatycki has solutions.

Collect data: Governments should fire up the analytics machine and turn infrastructure planning into a numbers game, collecting stats on mega projects as diligently as baseball teams do for batters.

Change incentives: Reward the best solution, not the cheapest. Data could help here, giving better insight into which builders provide accurate budget and time projections, and put them at the top of the heap for bids.

Budget boot camp: A U.K. program put all civil servants working on projects over a certain cost threshold through

a training program to ward off bad planning.

Rope in private dollars:

When public projects team up with private enterprise often the same people are responsible for designing, building and maintaining it, so they can't pass the buck or dodge deadlines. Also, the deals generally reward meeting targets along the way.

However it's done, fixes need to come soon, said Siemiatycki, who fears public confidence in government is waning "not only to deliver projects, but to use infrastructure to address the major challenges that our communities face."



All of this centres on Eurocentric beauty standards, which privilege those who are white or are white adjacent in appearance

Shantel Buggs, PhD candidate in sociology at University of Texas



The structural emasculation of Asian men in all forms of media became a self-fulfilling prophecy that produced an actual abhorrence to Asian men in the real world

TV host Eddie Huang



It's easy to keep yourself in the dark about racism and bias when you are part of the majority, and I seem to have shone a bit of light about this in those spaces

Hadiya Roderique, lawyer



Racism in the dating game

CULTURE

Black women and Asian men the victims of cultural biases

Sofi Papamarko
life@metronews.ca



"I'm open to dating women of all backgrounds," he tells me. "Except for black women."

"I've just never been attracted to Asian men," she says.

Uncomfortable yet? Unfortunately, the vast majority of singles I've worked with have clear racial preferences and biases when it comes to dating. Now that I'm four years into professional matchmaking, I've seen clear patterns emerge when it comes to race and attraction.

White men: congratulations! Women of every racial background seem to strongly prefer dating you. Asian and Latin women are most popular with the gents. Black women and Asian men are the two groups most notably at a dating disadvantage. They are the hardest singles for me to match, because they tend to be excluded from the match searches of the majority of clients.

The online dating world is also stacked against them. According to Christian Rudder's OKCupid

blog, stats from 2014 show that 82 per cent of non-black men on OKCupid show some bias against black women. Asian men's profiles are consistently rated the lowest by single women using online dating sites. But why?

"Attractiveness is a very haphazard dish that can't be boiled down to height or skin colour, but Asian men are told that regardless of what the idyllic mirepoix is or isn't, we just don't have the ingredients," television host Eddie Huang recently wrote in the New York Times.

Pop culture is a window into desire. Consider the male Asian characters in movies you've seen in the last several years. When was the last time you saw a North American film where a desirable Asian man played the lead and didn't know martial arts?

A similar story presents itself when we deconstruct black women in popular culture. In film and television, black women are often portrayed as two-dimensional "strong and sassy" stereotypes. When cast as a romantic interest, they're usually played by biracial or multiracial women with lighter skin tones.

"Society tells us that black women are hypersexual but also more masculine than other women, while it suggests that Asian men are less masculine — to the point of being effeminate — and that they are physically less attractive," says Shantel

Buggs, a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Texas.

The exclusion of Asian men is a particularly visible problem in the gay community. "No rice, no spice" is the social networking apps Scruff and Grindr parlance for "no East Asian men, no South Asian men." Straight people aren't as upfront about their prejudices, but having spoken to several women of colour about their time online, they seem to get fewer matches than other women and are frequently fetishized when they do connect.

In a recent feature article in the Walrus, lawyer Hadiya Roderique detailed her challenges dating as a woman of colour. When Hadiya photoshopped her dating profile photos so that she appeared to be a white woman, her profile's popularity skyrocketed.

"When you combine demographics, the fact that users disproportionately message others of the same race, fetishism, sexualization of blackness, racism and anti-blackness, it adds up to — to put it mildly — a 'harder time' in those spaces," she said.

So are you racist if you aren't open to dating everyone? I don't know. Are you the product of a racist society? Undoubtedly, yes. We all are. And we're going to have to work hard at being inclusive and open-minded in dating and in every other aspect of life if we're set on making any progress at all. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Knit this move in, untie those knots

YOGA

The Twisted Stitcher pose is tailor-made for warming up

YuMee Chung

life@metronews.ca

This week's offering is one of the exercises my granny would do, much to my chagrin, while watching me at the playground.

I use it today as a pre-yoga warm-up to mobilize the spine, relax the shoulders and improve circulation in the hands.

Take note knitters, crocheters and other textile artists: this one is tailor-made for you.

1. Situate yourself in a wide-open space with your feet set shoulder-distance apart and arms hanging slackly by your sides.

2. Rotate your spine to the right as you gaze over the right shoulder and pivot onto your left toes to protect your knees. Then, do the same on the second side.

3. Turn from side-to-side, gaining speed as you go.

4. Curl your hands into loose fists and, moving only with momentum, percussively massage your lower back.

5. Then, bring the hands up to thump the fronts of your shoulders.



YuMee demonstrates a Twisted Stitcher. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

6. Finally, gain enough momentum to throw the arms over your shoulders and tenderize your upper back and the corners of your neck for five or more breaths.

7. Decelerate until the body comes to stillness and your arms hang heavy by your sides.

8. Notice the warmth in your hands and the feeling of well-being.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

YuMee Chung is a recovering lawyer who teaches yoga in Toronto. She is on the faculty of several yoga teacher training programs. Learn more about her at padmani.com.

RANKING

It takes more than just money to be happy...ask the Norwegians

We're happy...just a little less happy than usual.

That's the main Canadian takeaway from the World Happiness Report where the country dropped to its lowest-ever ranking, coming in at seventh place, having usually occupied fifth or sixth on the list.

Norway is now the happiest country on Earth, Americans are getting sadder, and it takes more than just money to be happy were the other primary findings.

Norway vaulted to the top slot despite the plummeting price of oil, a key part of its economy. Income in the U.S. has gone up over the past decade, but hap-

piness is declining. The U.S. was 14th, down from No. 13 last year.

"It's the human things that matter. If the riches make it harder to have frequent and trustworthy relationship between people, is it worth it?" asked John Helliwell, the lead author of the report and an economist at the University of British Columbia. "The material can stand in the way of the human."

Norway moved from No. 4

to the top spot in the report's rankings, which combine economic, health and polling data compiled by economists that are averaged over three years from 2014 to 2016. Norway edged past previous champ Denmark, which fell to second. Iceland, Switzerland and Finland round out

the top 5.

Central African Republic fell to last on the happiness list, and is joined at the bottom by Burundi, Tanzania, Syria and Rwanda. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Not just for gamers: It's VR in the ER

TECHNOLOGY

Doctors adopt virtual reality to put patients' minds at ease

Jonathan Forani
life@metronews.ca

When 9-year-old Tess Baird landed at Sick Kids for surgery on a badly broken finger she was terrified.

"The big lights, all the big machines. I was really scared," she said.

To put her mind at ease, hospital staff gave her a virtual reality headset — futuristic-looking goggles with a 360-degree video screen — that detailed the impending procedure from a patient's perspective.

The frightened Brampton girl experienced a blow by blow of what to expect from the moment she'd be greeted by nursing staff, to being wheeled through the halls on a gurney, receiving anesthetic and falling into a fog, to finally waking up when it was over.

When she underwent the surgery 30 minutes later, she was no longer scared.

"Let's say I had 10 nerves. Nine of them were gone," said Tess, who broke her finger while roughhousing with her brother.

Virtual reality isn't just for gamers anymore. Toronto anesthesiologists Fahad Alam and Clyde Matava are using im-



Patient Tess Baird uses a VR headset while Dr. Ben O'Sullivan looks on as part of a project to ease pre-surgery anxiety. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

mersive reality in health care in the only such lab in Canada called the Collaborative Human Immersive and Interactive Lab (CHISIL).

They have tested the technology on more than 200 patients including Tess at The Hospital for Sick Children and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. "We're taking (VR) out of the gaming realm, and actually using it to help patients and changing care," said Alam. With the immersive experience, "the fear of unknown is kind of eliminated."

Doctors

are now analyzing the data and the results have been encouraging. There have been no episodes of "VR sickness" (headaches and nausea similar to motion sickness) and any fear prior to surgery has decreased. They found that nearly all the children at Sick Kids preferred the VR over traditional PowerPoint slides to explain the surgery process. One hundred parents of patients, including Tess's mom Kristen Wall, also tried the technology.

"There's nothing more frightening as a parent than

having one of your children sick or broken," said Wall, who found it eased her nerves as well.

"I watched (Tess) go from nervous and frightened to more armed with information."

Preoperative anxiety doesn't just affect children. It is a significant problem across all ages.

"Up to 80 per cent of patients coming for any type of surgery can be suffering from some form of preoperation anxiety," said Alam. That anxiety can result in pain and increased anesthetic requirements. The

unease doesn't just dissipate after surgery, it can delay recovery.

The VR could replace current less effective methods of stress relief including cartoon drawings, photographs and standard 2D video by allowing patients to "pre-experience the environment" in a gamelike way.

For Laura Victoria-Perez, 41, who suffers from social anxiety, the pre-surgery VR experience was ideal. "It feels like you're inside a video game," said Vic-



Let's say I had 10 nerves. Nine of them were gone.

Tess Baird, patient

toria-Perez, who had surgery in November. "If at my age I was afraid, I can only imagine how it scares some kids before a surgery."

Virtual reality is most often associated with pricey brands like Oculus Rift and PlayStation VR, which cost upwards of \$500. At Toronto's CHISIL lab, Matava and Alam have kept their costs in check using Google Cardboard, which is mounted to a smartphone rather than using its own screen. At \$5-\$15 per headset it is among the most inexpensive of VR options. The Sick Kids and Sunnybrook doctors hope that the technology will also be helpful for training health workers.

For Tess, the virtual reality prelude was a success.

"Don't worry," is her post-op advice. "It's not going to be as scary as you think."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INCLUSION

Muppet with autism joins street

Folks on Sesame Street have a way of making everyone feel accepted.

That certainly goes for Julia, a Muppet youngster with blazing red hair, bright green eyes — and autism. Rather than being treated like an outsider, which too often is the plight of kids on the spectrum, Julia is one of the gang.

Look: On this friendliest of streets (actually Studio J at New York's Kaufman Astoria Studios, where Sesame Street lives) Julia is about to play a game with Oscar, Abby and Grover. In this scene being taped for airing next season, these Muppet chums have been challenged to spot objects shaped like squares or circles or triangles. "You're lucky," says Abby to Grover. "You have Julia on your



Julia, a new autistic muppet character, debuts on April 10. AP

team, and she is really good at finding shapes!"

With that, they skedaddle, an exit that calls for the six Muppeteers squatted out of sight below them to scramble accordingly. Joining her pals, Julia (performed by Stacey Gordon) takes off hunting.

For more than a year, Julia has existed in print and digital

illustrations as the centerpiece of a multifaceted initiative by Sesame Workshop called Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children.

She has been the subject of a storybook released along with videos, e-books, an app and website. The goal is to promote a better understanding of what the Autism Speaks advocacy group describes as "a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences."

But now Julia has been brought to life in fine Muppet fettle. She makes her TV debut on Sesame Street in the Meet Julia episode airing April 10.

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Dig deeper before mocking pet parents

ANIMALS

Furry friends see humans through very tough times

It's easy to jump directly to "crazy cat lady" or poke fun at "stay-at-home dog moms" when describing intense relationships between humans and their pets.

But for some who spend the bulk of each day with their animals, it's more like a two-way healing labour of love.

Amy Hunter, 51, stayed home in Indiana with her three kids when they were little. Years later, she took a work-from-home job after the death of her son, Jake, piled on the loss of another son who had earlier drowned.

Now her daughter is about to graduate from college and Hunter is home full time with two dogs, a brown mix rescue named Apollo, who weighs in at about 90 pounds, and a black Labrador retriever, Rubi.

"I've become very, very, very in tune with them," said Hunter, who lives in Indianapolis. "We got Rubi as a puppy after my



John and Amy Hunter are childless by choice and Amy is a stay-at-home pet mom. AP

first son died. She's been my emotional saviour."

Her husband works outside the home, as a plant manager, so it's just mom and dogs during the day.

"After my second son died I cried a lot. I was anxiety ridden," Hunter explained. "What I found was how much I could communicate with my dogs."

Coleen Balent, 43, understands.

She stays home with her two kids, ages 10 and 8, as her

husband works as a computer network engineer for U.S. Navy hospitals outside their home. They've been stationed around the world and have been in the U.S. island territory of Guam, in the western Pacific, for nearly a year.

Rounding out the family are three rescue dogs, including one, 13-year-old Paolo, who has serious health issues. She and her husband found him years ago in Sicily, in a boat yard with his mouth taped shut. He had been

hit by a car.

"The vet told me he wouldn't make it through the night. I took him home with antibiotics and a nebulizer and he survived," Balent recalled. "Several years later, Paolo broke his back while we were living in Charleston, South Carolina."

The accident left him paralyzed, but after \$6,000 in surgery and three months of rehabilitation, he can hobble along, requiring help going up and down stairs and on and off beds. Three

years ago, Paolo was diagnosed with diabetes so Balent injects him with insulin twice a day, checking his glucose levels often.

"We can barely afford it, and it's a pain," she said. "I can never go anywhere for the day. I'm quite sure everyone thinks I'm crazy. Some people have flat out told me, but Paolo has seen me through two pregnancies, two severe postpartum depressions, an autoimmune disease and three moves to three different countries and continents."

For Hunter, each pet enriches her in different ways. Her black lab got her off the couch. "She gets me moving, she gets me going. There's no sitting anymore." She even feels her long hours alone with the two have

heightened their ability to communicate.

It's Apollo who tells her when it's time for breakfast. He's the vocal one. Both dogs comprehend about 250 of her words. Apollo can differentiate between ball, stick and his favourite toy, a Teddy bear.

"And they know what shoes I wear. If I put on running shoes, they're staying home. They don't move. If I put on just normal tennis shoes, we're walking and they go find their leashes. If I put on boots or dress shoes or something, they're not going. They know this. It's so funny," Hunter said. "I'm not the crazy dog lady. I know they're not my children, but I just feel very close to them." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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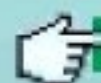
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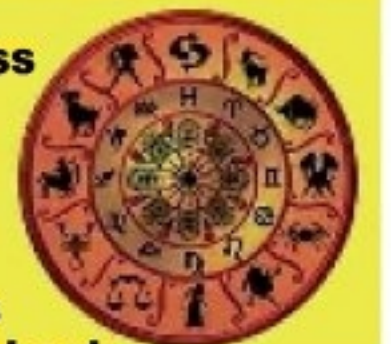
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YouTubers hit out at 'restricted' filter

SOCIAL MEDIA

Tegan and Sara lead calls to lift block on gay, trans content

A chorus of Canadian LGBTQ YouTubers, including pop duo Tegan and Sara, is calling for the video service to stop filtering out gay and trans-themed videos for some users.

The Calgary-raised sisters took to social media to question why YouTube's "restricted" setting blocks a wide variety of LGBTQ-friendly content for no clear reason.

"If you put YouTube on restricted mode a bunch of our music videos disappear. I checked myself. LGBTQ people shouldn't be restricted. SAD!"

Tegan and Sara (below) tweeted. Among the missing clips were videos from their latest album, including for "That Girl" and "U-turn."

They were joined by Halifax singer Ria Mae, who said her video for Gold, which features the singer in a lesbian relationship, was also being filtered out.

"Young gay kids need to see themselves represented and they need to know it's normal, it's OK and it's not X-rated," Mae said in a video on her Instagram account.



"It sends a bad message to young gay kids and young trans kids that their lives are not normal or acceptable."

At issue is YouTube's "restricted" designation, which lets parents, schools and libraries

filter content that may be considered inappropriate for users under 18. YouTube calls it "an optional feature used by a very small subset of users."

What's unclear is whether the types of videos in question are being labelled as "restricted" for the first time, or if this has been an ongoing practice that's only recently gained attention.

Video producer Michael Rizzi, who's based in Toronto, says he's concerned with the message it sends to loyal YouTube users. He's seen 176 of his 236 videos disappear in "restricted" mode, representing 75 per cent of the clips he's uploaded over the past five years.

"It's more a feeling of being pushed to the side," Rizzi says. "It's a pretty big screw-up on their end."

In an emailed statement on Monday, YouTube acknowledged the filter saying "some videos that cover subjects like health, politics and sexuality may not appear for users and institutions that choose to use this feature."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Underfed and vulnerable but Anne's resolve is unwavering

THE SHOW: Anne, Season 1, Episodes 1 & 2 (CBC)

THE MOMENT: The stump

Siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert (R.H. Thomson and Geraldine James, both perfect) wanted to adopt a boy to help work their Prince Edward Island farm. Instead they got Anne (Amybeth McNulty, also perfect) an exuberant, redheaded orphan tween whose imagination outweighs her underfed frame. Matthew fell for her, but Marilla, more practical, thinks Anne should return to the orphanage.

"Couldn't I do the farm chores even though I'm a girl?" Anne asks.

"That's not the way of things and you know it," Marilla replies.

"But couldn't I?" Anne persists. "I'm as strong as a boy, and I prefer to be outdoors."

Marilla's resolve wavers. "Do you consider yourself to be delicate and incapable?" Anne asks. "Because I don't."

That's the text of this Anne



Amybeth McNulty is perfect as exuberant Anne. CONTRIBUTED

reboot, from creator Moira Walley-Beckett, who went from writing Breaking Bad to creating the backstage-at-the-ballet drama Flesh and Bone to Green Gables.

But Walley-Beckett also gives us subtext. Reading between the novel's lines and adding verisimilitude, she gives us quick but potent glimpses of the miseries many orphans faced in 1890s Imperialist culture.

As Anne makes her case to Marilla, we recall two flashes we've just seen: Anne, alone in a room in an orphan asylum,

with two men moving in on her as the door swings shut. And Anne, in indentured servitude to a family with too many children, bent over a stump, skirts lifted, being beaten by a drunk man.

She doesn't tell Marilla why she so desperately needs to stay. But Walley-Beckett makes sure we see it.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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SENIOR LIFE

A deal for seniors every day of the week at Panda Hut Express

Panda Hut Express is now offering a new dinner-for-two special especially for seniors, which includes two egg rolls; sweet-and-sour pork; beef stir fry with fresh vegetables, and chicken fried rice, all for just \$19.99.

"Senior's day is now seven days a week here at Panda Express," explains Panda Hut Express owner, Sunny Ng, who says the meal for two would normally cost \$34. "Seniors can enjoy a great meal at a great price—we want to cater to seniors and give them a better deal to share."

Panda Hut Express' dinner-for-two senior's special is available for dine-in, take-out, and delivery orders for all customers 65 years old and over who mention the promotion when ordering.

Panda Hut Express also gives seniors 20 per cent off on all menu items every Wednesday as part of their weekly specials that include spicy chicken combos for \$9.95 on Monday, rice and noodles for half price on Tuesday, and their delicious chicken satay for just \$1.19 on Thursday.

The dinner-for-two senior's special is available at both Panda Hut Express's north side location at 14204 118 Ave. and their south side location at 10879 23 Ave. NW.

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Police say Tom Brady's missing Super bowl jersey has been tracked in "possession of a credentialed member of the international media" in Mexico

Hart-racing shift

Sidney Crosby and Connor McDavid looked to be running away from the pack in the Hart Trophy race at mid-season but, since then, a flood of worthy contenders has emerged. Here is a look at the now crowded field:

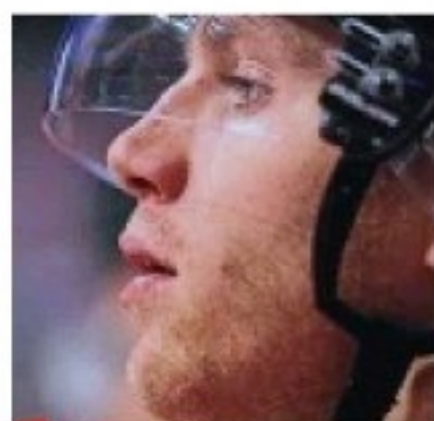
1 Sidney Crosby

He's No. 1 in points-per-game and clinched his first 40-goal season since 2009-10. He's right there in the thick of the race for the Rocket Richard and Art Ross trophies despite a nearly two-week absence to start the season.



2 Connor McDavid

He's only 20, in his second NHL season and already an MVP candidate. The Oilers' captain has had a hand in almost 40 per cent of his club's offence, leads the NHL in assists and is a favourite to win the scoring title.



3 Patrick Kane

He's not producing at last year's MVP pace — 46 goals and 106 points — but has been pretty close to it in the past couple months, collecting 20 goals and 30 points since Feb. 1. The NHL hasn't had a repeat MVP winner since Alex Ovechkin (2008, 2009).



4 Evgeni Malkin

Second to only Crosby in points-per-game, Malkin is headed for his biggest season offensively since 2011-12 when he won the Art Ross and Hart trophies by posting 50 goals and 109 points.



5 Brad Marchand

No one had more goals or points since the beginning of December heading into Monday's action, making the 28-year-old from Hammonds Plains, N.S., a viable threat to win both the Art Ross and Rocket Richard.

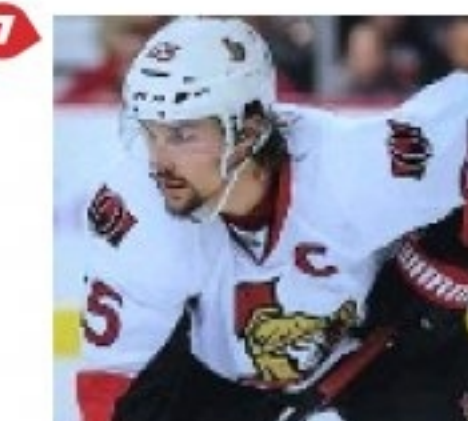


6 Brent Burns

Burns is tracking toward one of the more electric seasons from a defenceman ever. He has an outside shot at joining Paul Coffey, Bobby Orr, Ray Bourque, Denis Potvin and Doug Wilson (his GM in San Jose) as the only blue-liners to crack 30 goals and 80 points.

Erik Karlsson

Ottawa's captain is tiptoeing back into the Hart race with maybe the most well-rounded season of his career. Karlsson is pretty close to a point-per-game again despite a drop in ice-time while leading the league in blocked shots.



PAY EQUITY

USA Hockey, women's team hopeful for deal

USA Hockey and the women's national team say their marathon meeting Monday was productive and they hope to have an agreement this week that will end their ongoing wage dispute and avoid a boycott of the upcoming world championships.

The sides met for more than 10 hours Monday in Philadelphia and will continue discussions later this week. Players announced last week they'd boycott the upcoming world championships in Plymouth, Mich., unless significant progress was made toward a labour agreement.

USA Hockey and players released statements Monday

night saying they hoped a deal would be reached in time for the tournament, which begins March 31.

Players said they were hopeful to get an agreement in time to have a training camp and prepare to defend their world championship gold medal on home ice.

"We feel like we made progress today," star forward Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson said by phone. "They were productive, and we are hopeful that we can come to a timely agreement that would get us to Plymouth in time to prepare as a team so that we could compete in worlds." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



NHL

Talbot stonewalls Kings in Oilers' win

Cam Talbot made 35 saves to record his second shutout in as many games and seventh of the season as the Edmonton Oilers closed out an eight-game homestand with a 2-0 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Monday.

Patrick Maroon and Milan Lucic scored for the Oilers (39-24-9), who won their fourth game in a row to move one point ahead of Calgary and into a tie for second place in the Pacific Division with Anaheim. Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid each had a pair of assists, moving McDavid back into the NHL's scoring lead with 82 points.

Jonathan Quick stopped 29 shots for the Kings (34-31-7), who have lost four of their

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2	0
OILERS	KINGS

last five games, further dashing their playoff hopes.

It was the third of five meetings between the Oilers and Kings this season, with the two teams splitting the first two encounters. The next time the teams face each other is on March 28, also in Edmonton.

The Oilers are in Anaheim to face the Ducks on Wednesday night, while the Kings return home to host the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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5	1	6	4	3	8	7	9	2
3	4	9	7	5	2	8	1	6
2	7	8	1	9	6	4	5	3
4	3	5	6	2	7	9	8	1
6	2	7	8	1	9	3	4	5
8	9	1	3	4	5	6	2	7
1	8	3	5	6	4	2	7	9
7	5	2	9	8	3	1	6	4
9	6	4	2	7	1	5	3	8

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Donaldson eyes 'next step'

BLUE JAYS

Third baseman back in lineup, confident about team in 2017

Josh Donaldson said the words that everyone in the Blue Jays' spring training camp has been waiting to hear.

The club's third baseman pronounced his injured calf muscle trouble-free after his spring debut Monday, then reiterated his belief that the Jays should be a highly competitive team and a post-season threat.

"It's good to get back into it, I'm good to go," Donaldson said as the Jays dropped an 8-2 deci-

sion to Minnesota in Dunedin.

"I just want to win games. I feel like we have the team to compete. Doing what we have to do and what we can do to win games, that's what this is all about."

This was only a spring training game, roughly halfway through camp, but when the Jays' top player is amped up about his recovery and the club's forecast, it's important. Injuries and the World Baseball Classic have disrupted the Jays' spring. And Donaldson, the 2015 American League MVP, left an unmistakable void in the roster. The team wasn't complete without him.

His return from a calf muscle problem is just the start of a roster reunion. Outfielder Jose Bautista could be back from the



Josh Donaldson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WBC as early as Tuesday. Second baseman Devon Travis — playing in minor-league games — should join the big club in a matter of days. Starter Marcus Stroman will return once the United States is finished at the WBC this week. The Jays' starting nine should be appearing more regularly in spring games. There are still question marks in some areas.

Ezequiel Carrera left Monday's game favouring his right leg after a seventh-inning collision with Darwin Barney. If Carrera is lost for any length of time, it will only further cloud the Jays' still unsettled left-field picture.

But Donaldson ensured everyone watching the Jays that the core group of players are ready to earnestly challenge for the post-season for the third year in a row.

"We've been on the edge for two years now," said Donaldson, referring to the Jays' exits in the American League Championship Series to Kansas City in 2015 and Cleveland last season. "We want that next step now, and we believe we have the team that can do it."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

Homan rink rises to top

Rachel Homan and her Canada rink gave themselves a confidence boost Monday in their quest for gold at the women's world curling championship, handing Switzerland its first loss and taking sole possession of first place in the round-robin in Beijing.

Canada improved to 5-0 with an 8-6 win over Swiss skip by Alina Paetz, a two-time world champion.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cowboys re-sign QB Moore

The Dallas Cowboys have re-signed backup pivot Kellen Moore. Before Moore broke his ankle in the first week of training camp last year and missed the entire season, he

had been expected to back up Tony Romo.

When Moore was hurt, rookie quarterback Dak Prescott got his chance after Romo got hurt. Prescott Prescott became starter and won an NFC East title. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Warriors ease past Thunder

Klay Thompson scored 34 points to help the Golden State Warriors beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 111-95 on Monday night in a heated matchup filled with trash talking, physical play and technical fouls.

The Warriors controlled the game, leading by as many as 27 points.

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Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

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Serves 2

Ingredients

- 1 can tuna, packed in water (5 oz)
- 1 stem of celery, chopped fine
- 3 or 4 cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 or 2 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tortillas
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1/2 avocado, sliced

Directions

1. In a bowl, mix tuna, celery, tomatoes and mayonnaise.
2. Lay your tortillas on a work surface. Spoon a stripe of tuna mixture down the middle of each tortilla. Now lay down a strip of the grated carrot, right next to the tuna. Place slices of avocado right next to the carrot.
3. Wrap one side of the tortilla over the other. Now tuck in the sides and keep rolling so everything is snugly inside.
4. Slice the tortilla in half and serves with a side of mixed greens.

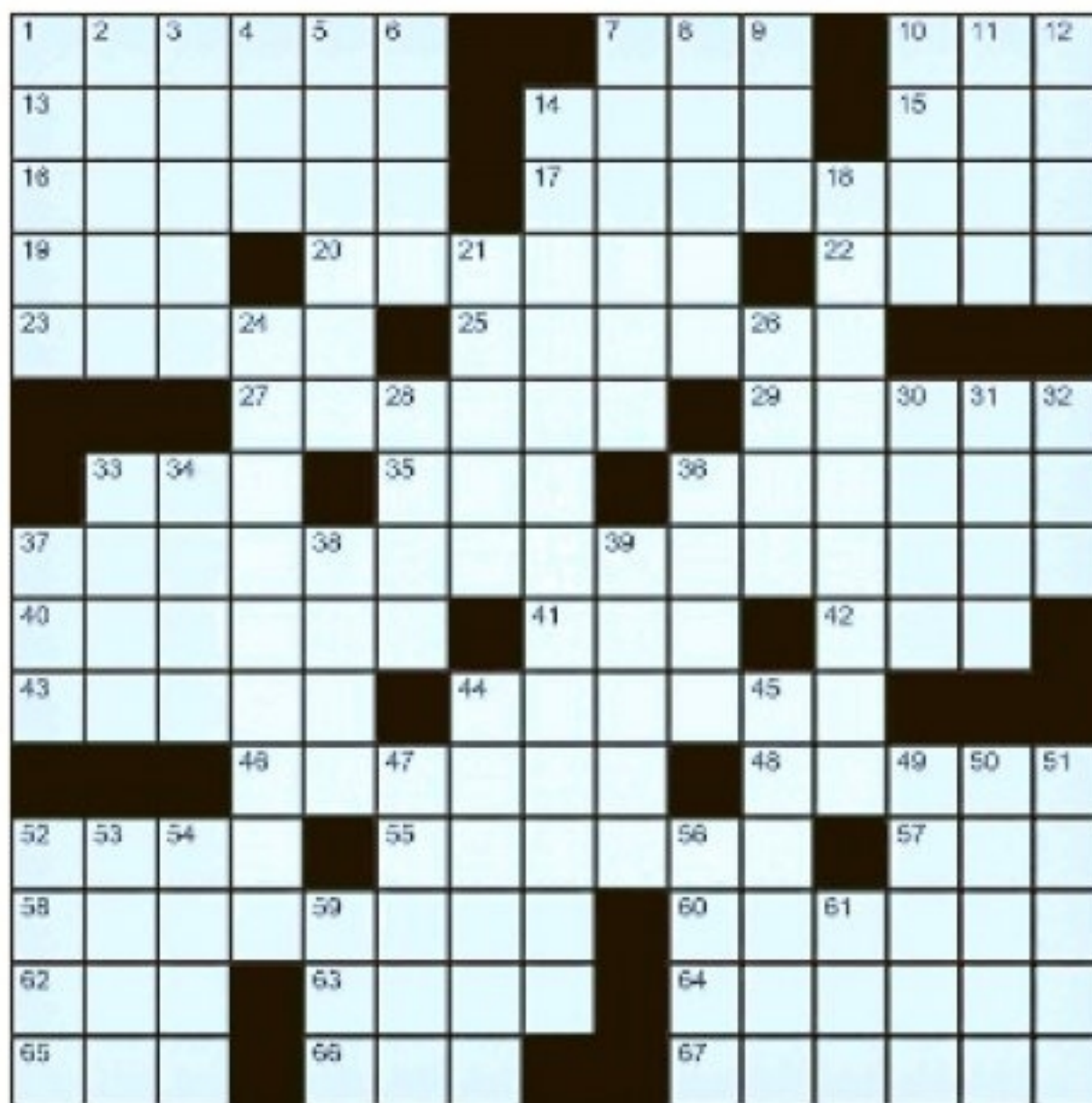
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ACROSS

1. North West Mounted Police officer, Sam _ (b.1849 - d.1919)
7. Undergarment, e.g.
10. Canadian restaurant chain, The _ Steakhouse + Bar
13. Pondered
14. _ lily
15. Brick wall's greenery
16. Checking out a website
17. Naysayer
19. Pad _ Mao (Rice noodles dish)
20. Garden statues
22. Via, in verse
23. Accounting firm, _ & Young
25. Most abundant
27. Peoples' possessive pronouns
29. Entice
33. Neither here _ there
35. "The Crying Game" (1992) actor Stephen
36. More blood-and-guts-ish
37. Canadian magician Doug Henning was this political group's candidate (in the Rose-dale riding of Toronto) in the 1993 federal election: 3 wds.
40. Unchanged: 3 wds.
41. " _ Kids" (2001)
42. Telephone bk. listings
43. Fettuccine is a form
44. Like the CN logo
46. 1928: Trivial Breath poet Ms. Wylie
48. Requirements



52. 'Shake' with a spoon
55. Expressed
57. Shoppers Drug Mart cosmetics line
58. Population counts
60. Temple ceremony
62. Dramatist's division

63. Way to kick the football
64. Creature in a Tennessee Williams play title
65. 17th Greek letter
66. _ in stone
67. More man-of-the-monor-ly

DOWN

11. Deep Purple's " _ on the Water"
2. Radio dial
3. Ms. DeGeneres
4. High Priest in the Old Testament
5. Distance
6. Shangri-la

7. Summarizing papers
8. The Russian language, in Quebec City
9. Band's bitty blaster
10. _ and kin (Friends and family)
11. Goffin-King

- penned tune: "Don't _ Change"
12. Pita serving perhaps
14. Scenic driving route in the Avalon region of Newfoundland: 2 wds.
18. Vocalization
21. Bay window
24. Models when on the fashion runway
26. End the endlessness
28. Epochs
30. Spanish artist, Joan _ (b.1893 - d.1983)
31. Goldfish and canaries
32. " _ (Just a Little Bit Harder)" by Janis Joplin
33. Galaxy gr.
34. Mr. Redding
36. Ms. Paltrow, for short
37. Reclined rest
38. Oman money
39. Towards the ship's left side
44. Aim
45. Jeans hue
47. Periodical's particular publishing
49. = meaning
50. One of the NHL's six Sutter Brothers from Viking, Alberta
51. Sun-related
52. Boo-boo in Al Pacino's 1983 flick
53. _ savvy
54. Call Question link
56. CNN anchor Ms. Burnett
59. Un-downs
61. _ of margarine

* IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You should know that others notice you today, especially bosses, parents and VIPs. Therefore, be mindful of your behaviour. Fortunately, you will be sympathetic toward someone, which makes you look good.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Thoughts of travelling appeal to you now. In particular, you will appreciate the beauty of arts and crafts from other cultures. You also will enjoy the stimulation of different surroundings.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If you have to divide or share something with someone today, you will be more than generous. In fact, remember to be fair to yourself as well. Don't give away the farm.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Today you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. Fortunately, you will find this easy to do because you feel genuinely sympathetic and concerned for someone else's welfare.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Because you feel sympathetic toward a co-worker today, he or she might come to you for advice or counseling. Never pass up an opportunity to practice kindness.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Welcome any opportunity to express your creative talent today. You are not a noun; you are a verb. It's the doing that really counts.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You might want to cocoon at home today and seek out some privacy, because you feel the need to catch your breath and enjoy your own space. That's just fine. We all need to do this from time to time.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
When talking to others today, you won't be satisfied with superficial chitchat. You want a real, meaningful discussion with someone. (Not just comments about the weather.)

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If out shopping today, you might be tempted to spend too much money on luxurious items. It's your nature to go big or go home.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Today the moon is in your sign, which makes you more emotional than usual. The good news is that this can attract a little bit of extra good luck!

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today you will prefer some privacy. Ideally, you will work alone or behind the scenes, because this will suit you best.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
A conversation with a female friend is important. Perhaps you need to confide in someone, or someone needs to confide in you.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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